

AP: God rewards the one who **prayerfully endures like the prophets**—He rewarded Elijah. He rewarded Job. And He rewards us, as well! All that He desires is for us to **prayerfully endure like the prophets** before us:

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ²for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. ³For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1TM 2:1-4)

CONCLUSION (JM 5:19-20)

WAR/The Patriotic War of 1812/Purpose of Napoleon

WAR/The Patriotic War of 1812/Strategy of Barclay de Tolly

Napoleon fought on. Three weeks became a month. By the end of the second month, Napoleon had already lost 100,000 men do disease and desertion before a single major battle was fought, leaving a trail of corpses as it marched towards Moscow. Following the single day Battle of Borodino, an additional 35,000 French troops were dead, and upon his final entry into Moscow, proper, Napoleon found the city deserted, its supply depots burned. The general who had planned so carefully and marched so confidently discovered that his confidence was poorly placed—**his impatience punished** and his ability to **endure** the wilderness of Russia found wanting.

WAR/The Patriotic War of 1812/Fleeing from Russia

Napoleon's army fell not to a failure to plan, but a failure to plan correctly. Napoleon trusted in his own strategies and wisdom: which all failed him. In that way, he was similar to the rich that **JM** warned at the start of the chapter who **presumptuously persisted in their prosperity** even at the cost of others. **JM** reminds us to, instead, **patiently persist in the promise of God**—for our power and our plans will fail, but He never will!

Napoleon's army was unable to **endure** the wilderness—and as a result, his invasion of Russia now stands as a military truism: **“never fight a land war in Asia”**. But **JM** would point to the seemingly unendurable that His prophets endured: and that He rewarded them—just as He'll reward we who **prayerfully endure like the prophets** before us!

INVITATION

The wealthy members **JM** wrote to were stagnant—their faith failing due to their own Napoleonic overconfidence. But as we get to the end of the letter, **JM** encouraged his audience that there was still a path back:

JM 5:19-20 ~ *Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, ²⁰let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.*

QUESTION: What is a real Christian like?

TRN TO JM 5

INTRODUCTION

WAR/The Patriotic War of 1812/Summary

To this day, Napoleon is viewed as one of the greatest military generals of all time—one of the great conquerors and leaders of the last 200 years! But as America and Brittan waged war a continent away, Napoleon planned for what he expected to be the greatest battle of his military career.

WAR/The Patriotic War of 1812/Preparations of Napoleon – Part 1

BACKGROUND (JM 4:13-17)

JM consists of boatloads of practical advice: preparing his Christian audience for how to be real Christians. He urged them to be **patient in testing, a practitioner of the truth, a proper teacher, and at peace**. And yet, he also understood that this peace would, eventually come to an end.

JM 4:13-17 ~ *Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”; ¹⁴whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. ¹⁵Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.” ¹⁶But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.*

In fact, James' audience had come to understand something that all of us eventually come to learn if we live for long enough: life is impossible to truly predict. You can plan, you can prepare, but at the end of the day, our lives are but *a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away*. Eventually, all our plans will come to naught—a truth that Napoleon would come to face, himself—and **what will we do then?** In answer, JM reminds us that the Christian **patiently persists and prayerfully endures**.

BD1: Patiently Persists in the Promise (JM 5:1-8)

WAR/The Patriotic War of 1812/Preparations of Napoleon – Part 2

And so, the great general prepared: marshalling his forces for what would turn out to be one of the most impactful battles of his military career. He thought he was prepared—but all his preparations would come to be for naught. Similarly, **JM** wrote of the wealthy and powerful in his audience: who were, themselves, heading in a very similar direction.

JM 5:1-6 ~ *Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you!*

EX: The wealthy thought themselves prepared: they thought themselves capable to stand against anything that could come their way. But James said they should “weep and howl for [the] miseries that are coming upon [them].” They’d made the mistake countless other powerful and influential people had made before them: they trusted in their own power and wealth. Instead, Paul had advised them to invest not in their own abilities and power, but in good works: *Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.*¹⁸ *Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share,*¹⁹ *storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.* (1TM 6.17-19)

JM 5.2-3 ~ *Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.*³ *Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days.*

EX: It would have been one thing had they only “**invested**” in themselves and their own wealth. In that way, they’d have followed the example of “**the foolish builder**” from LK 12 (which would have been bad enough). But they didn’t just do that—they’d ensured their own comfort by taking advantage of others: *Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.*⁵ *You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.*⁶ *You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you.* (JM 5.4-6)

These wealthy and influential believers had **presumptuously persisted in prosperity**—taking pride in their power and strength. But **JM** urged the brethren, instead, to **patiently persist in the promise** of God:

JM 5.7-8 ~ *Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.*⁸ *You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.*

AP: The farmer is the perfect example of the patience that **JM** calls for the church to have: near endless hours and effort are expended by the farmer in preparation for the harvest. They don’t rush to dig up the crops after the first day, or the early rain, but **patiently persist in the promise** of the harvest—knowing that there is a promised award awaiting them: the fullness of the harvest! In the same way, **JM** urges for the church to **patiently persist**—trusting in the **promise of God**: that His coming is at hand: both against those wicked wealthy who were oppressing them, and ultimately, at the end of their earthly lives. *“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.* (RV 22.12)

BD2: Prayerfully Endures Like the Prophets (JM 5.9-18)

WAR/The Patriotic War of 1812/Crossing the Niemen

Yet, Napoleon pushed on—he endured in his efforts!

JM 5.9 ~ *Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!* **JM** understood that, often, our patience can begin to fail when facing the difficulties of day-to-day life. For that reason, he urged the church to not only **persist**, but to trust: to know that God is coming and that justice will ultimately win out against the injustice and unrighteousness around them. And in those moments, we are called to **prayerfully endure like the prophets** before us!.

JM 5.10-11 ~ *My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.*¹¹ *Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.*

EX: **JM** calls to mind men like Elijah, who proclaimed and endured the drought for 3.5 years. Jeremiah who was thrown in a well to die, and yet endured through the siege of Jerusalem. Daniel who was thrown in the lion’s den and lasted, untouched, through the night. And Job, who endured physical, emotional, and social agony—and who still **endured**!

At first, **vs. 12** may seem out of place: *But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your “Yes” be “Yes,” and your “No,” “No,” lest you fall into judgment.* But, in fact, it would have been tempting for them to have made rash oaths to prove or demonstrate their faithfulness in light of all they were enduring. But instead, they should remain in simple and honest integrity: **prayerfully enduring like the prophets** before them.

But what does that look like in real life? He describes it clearly in the remainder of the chapter: *Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.*¹⁴ *Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.*¹⁵ *And the prayer of faith will save the sick, the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.*¹⁶ *Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.* (JM 5.12-16)

AP: We think that faithfulness requires big and grand gestures. But in truth, it simply requires faithfulness—endurance! Praying for the suffering. Singing a joyful psalm. Caring for the sick and confessing our sins—to God, and to one another. We think of the great acts of the Old Testament: people like Elijah who, in his faith, prayed and stopped the rain. And we think that’s amazing—and shows some powerful “**super-faith**”. But in truth, **JM** reveals to us that *Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.*¹⁸ *And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.* (JM 5.17-18)